

Criterion C: Critical thinking

This criterion assesses the extent to which critical-thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.
1–3	<p>The research is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research presented is limited and its application is not clearly relevant to the RQ. <p>Analysis is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited analysis. Where there are conclusions to individual points of analysis these are limited and not consistent with the evidence. <p>Discussion/evaluation is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An argument is outlined but this is limited, incomplete, descriptive or narrative in nature. The construction of an argument is unclear and/or incoherent in structure hindering understanding. Where there is a final conclusion, it is limited and not consistent with the arguments/evidence presented. There is an attempt to evaluate the research, but this is superficial. <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than three marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>
4–6	<p>The research is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some research presented is appropriate and its application is partially relevant to the Research question. <p>Analysis is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is analysis but this is only partially relevant to the research question; the inclusion of irrelevant research detracts from the quality of the argument. Any conclusions to individual points of analysis are only partially supported by the evidence. <p>Discussion/evaluation is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An argument explains the research but the reasoning contains inconsistencies. The argument may lack clarity and coherence but this does not significantly hinder understanding. Where there is a final or summative conclusion, this is only partially consistent with the arguments/evidence presented. The research has been evaluated but not critically.
7–9	<p>The research is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the research is appropriate and its application is clearly relevant to the research question. <p>Analysis is good.</p>

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research is analysed in a way that is clearly relevant to the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research rarely detracts from the quality of the overall analysis. • Conclusions to individual points of analysis are supported by the evidence but there are some minor inconsistencies. <p>Discussion/evaluation is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective reasoned argument is developed from the research, with a conclusion supported by the evidence presented. • This reasoned argument is clearly structured and coherent and supported by a final or summative conclusion; minor inconsistencies may hinder the strength of the overall argument. • The research has been evaluated, and this is partially critical.
10–12	<p>The research is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research is appropriate to the research question and its application is consistently relevant. <p>Analysis is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research is analysed effectively and clearly focused on the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research does not significantly detract from the quality of the overall analysis. • Conclusions to individual points of analysis are effectively supported by the evidence. <p>Discussion/evaluation is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective and focused reasoned argument is developed from the research with a conclusion reflective of the evidence presented. • This reasoned argument is well structured and coherent; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument or the final or summative conclusion. • The research has been critically evaluated.